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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002975

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- ADDED CLASSIFIER INFO AND REASON

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#) [KV](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE  
TEMPERED BY ESDP FRUSTRATIONS

REF: A. ANKARA 2949

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2085

[1](#)C. SECSTATE 165486

Classified by: Political Counselor Jaince G. Weiner, reasons 1.4(b),  
(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and Comment: There is little public concern in Turkey over Kosovo's final status. The GOT continues to view independence as inevitable. Because public support cuts across party lines, there will be a strong political consensus for Turkey to play a post-independence role. Nevertheless, as the debate over Turkey's EU bid heats up, its participation in the ESDP police mission will remain a highly contentious issue (ref a). Reported French insistence on removing language concerning Turkey's "accession" and possible eventual EU "membership" from the upcoming EU Enlargement Statement has touched a particularly strong nerve within the GOT. While the Turkish military and bureaucracy may differ with the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) on some issues, MFA Department Head for the Balkans remarked that, following the most recent EU rebuff, "there is now no daylight between us" regarding the Turkish position on ESDP. End Summary and Comment.

[1](#)2. (C) MFA Balkans Department Head Ilhan Saygili repeated previous assurances that GOT Kosovo policy remains unchanged and closely parallels that of the U.S. and the EU majority (ref b). While Turkey will not be one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo due to regional sensitivities, the GOT will inevitably join the international community in fully supporting independence. Timing will depend on Serbian (and Russian) reactions and solidarity within the EU.

[1](#)3. (C) Saygili emphasized that Turkey maintains open lines of communication with both Pristina and Belgrade. (Serbian President Tadic traveled to Ankara on November 29. FM Babacan is planning to visit Pristina on December 26.) GOT officials have utilized every opportunity to encourage a peaceful resolution. Political Counselor Zeljko Gajic at the Serbian Embassy to Ankara remarked "The Government of Turkey always respects the sensibilities of Belgrade." Nevertheless, the GOS remains pragmatic about Turkish support and acknowledges that Turkey will undoubtedly recognize Kosovo. Such a decision, he added, "will not bring an end to

the relationship."

¶4. (C) While the MFA retains concerns about moving forward without a new UNSCR, Saygili noted the decision ultimately lies in the hands of the politicians. AKP MP Mevlut Cavusoglu told us that, due to historical ties to the region and a large Balkans domestic constituency (including several million Turks of Albanian decent), Turkish support for Kosovo is a given. He estimated at least 80 percent of MPs would favor independence without question. Opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) MP Muharrem Ince echoed Cavusoglu's assessment, highlighting his own Balkan heritage.

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